

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4 are currently pending. Claims 1 and 4 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to Claims 1 and 4 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent No. 11239926A to Inaba et al. (hereinafter “the ‘926 patent”).

Applicants request that the Information Disclosure Statement and PTO Form-1449 filed on February 24, 2004, be acknowledged as considered by the Examiner. In this regard, Applicants note that some of the references listed on the Form 1449 have been initialed as considered by the Examiner, although some have not.

Amended Claim 1 is directed to a product disassembling and assembling system, comprising: (1) a commonly used facility configured to assemble a product in an assembly mode and to disassemble a used-product in a disassembly mode; and (2) a computer configured to send an instruction to the commonly used facility for practicing the assembly mode or the disassembly mode. Further, Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the commonly used facility is configured to assemble the product and to disassemble the used product in a common assembly/disassembly line. The changes to Claim 1 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.¹

Regarding the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103, Applicants note that only a single reference has been cited by the Examiner. However, Applicants note that the Office

¹ See, e.g., Figure 2 and page 9 of the specification.

Action fails to set forth how that single reference (the '926 patent) fails to disclose all of the limitations recited in Claim 1, and the motivation to modify the teachings of the '926 patent.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 1 is rendered moot by the present amendment to that claim.

The '926 patent is directed to a part recycling system and a method of disassembly. As shown in Figure 4 and as described in the Abstract, the '926 patent discloses an assembly line (a) and a disassembly line (b). Further, the '926 patent discloses that a first conveyor 74 supplies used parts taken from the disassembly line to the assembly line (a), while a second conveyor 74 supplies parts from a storage area to the assembly line (a). However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '926 patent fails to disclose that either of the conveyors assembly a product or disassembly a used product, as recited in Claim 1. Rather, the conveyors merely transport a product. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the '926 patent fails to disclose that the commonly used facility is configured to assemble the product and to disassemble the used product in a same assembly/disassembly line, as recited in amended Claim 1. Rather, the '926 patent discloses a conveyor for transporting parts from a disassembly line (b) to a separate assembly line (a). Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 1 (and dependent Claims 2 and 3) patentably define over the '926 patent.

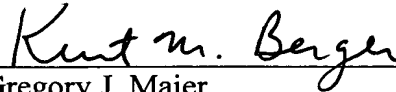
Amended Claim 4 recites limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claim 1. Moreover, Claim 4 has been amended in a manner analogous to the amendment to Claim 1. Accordingly, for the reasons stated above for the patentability of Claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 4 is rendered moot by the present amendment to that claim.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1 and 4 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over the '926 patent.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as admitted herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Gregory J. Maier
Registration No. 25,599
Attorney of Record
Kurt M. Berger, Ph.D.
Registration No. 51,461

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)
KMB:aif

I:\ATTY\KMB\248870US-AM.DOC